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## Happy employees mean money in the bank

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(Photo provided by Jeff Kroll)

Business owners know that having employees is an investment in your business, including time, money and effort. Yet, not all owners understand that to truly get the most bang for your investment buck when it comes to employees, you must make and keep them happy.

Why do I care if these people are happy? They have a job, collect a paycheck, who care if they're happy.

Sure, you can think that way. You can put your faith and bottom line on the investment concept of

"you're doing them a favor". There are plenty of those employers out there.

The fact of the matter is, such places of business don't have loyal employees who are there because they want to be. These places of business don't have people who are invested in the business, just the paycheck. These places of business don't have people who working at their best to make their business successful.

So, was that "who care" attitude really worth it?

Jeff Kroll, one of our reoccurring expert guests, believes that keeping his employees happy is not only a key factor in a successful business, it's a real investment in the bottom line of your business. According to Jeff, retaining talented staff takes work, and a happy employee is a productive employee.

"For me, I wanted people that were devoted to me and my mission here. I went through a number of employees at the outset that didn't share in my vision. And now that I have all of these people with me, it make it so much more fun to work here," says jeff. He adds, "I wanted to create an environment where people wanted to come to work, people wanted me to do well, so if I did well, they did well. And at the outset I had some people who weren't as committed, and candidly, weren't as talented as the people that I found."

Jeff believes that having people around him who make his business better was important. Finding the right people to fit, not just the personality of the place, but the mission for success was vital, and he did what it took. That meant a major investment of time and resources. He adds, "I spent a lot of time and effort cultivating and finding these people."

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Such an effort does not come cheaply, therefore, return on this investment is a key component in retaining those efforts and making them pay.

At Jeff's Chicago law firm, many of his employees have worked for him for more than 10 years. In modern America, such loyalty is a rarity: on both sides of the coin. Yet, not only are Jeff's employees loyal, they feel lucky to be in such a supportive environment.

Associate Jessica Bloodgood says, "I actually look forward to coming to the office everyday. The fact that Jeff respects our lives outside the office, not only makes me feel respected as an employee, but also as an individual. It helps me focus on the task at hand, and focus on the client."

The majority of Jeff's employees left a prominent law firm in Chicago that has longevity and higher salaries - to work for him.

Why would they do that?

Because Jeff believes in treating his people well, in making an investment in their talents and abilities, and turning that into a positive for his clients and in turn, his business.

Among the ways Jeff works to keep his talented staff: he takes the entire staff to lunch three times a week, allows for ample flexibility, and creates a very congenial environment. Unlike most law offices, theirs is friendly, warm, yet professional. (Read Jeff's [10 Tips for Keeping Staff Happy](#))

Associate Heather Begley adds, "I know Jeff values my work and appreciates the results I get. It is encouraging to receive praise and recognition, especially when you put in long hours. I find myself working that much harder in return because I am so appreciative of the flexibility that he offers."

Does Jeff believe that a once or twice a year "investment" bring anything to the table? Do the Christmas party, appreciation dinner or a once-a-year bonus really do it, when you've got a 365 day a year business?

"It's hard when you work all year round, you see the same bodies day in and day out, and one day a year you get to let your hair down. To me, that's not the greatest way for moral to be upbeat. We still have the Christmas party at the end of the year, but going to lunch, going out or happy hour, meeting the spouses, meeting the children, that shows that you're invested in not only in that person, but their families as well. I think that's that you're invested in not only in that person, but their families as well. I think that's important for trying to create this environment. That shows I care. If I cared about you and your family, and you care about me and my family, we're both going to do well."

What's the bottom line for Jeff as an employer, and what does he want you as a business owner to understand about his ideas?

"in creating this business, my ultimate outcome was to have a place where people wanted to come, and I wanted them to be here. We've all had the offices where the person in the cubical or office next to us is just despised. I don't have that here. Everybody likes each other, everybody knows each other, and that's the only way I want this business to be. That's my ultimate outcome."

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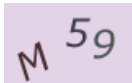
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